

HLW & FD

EIS PROJECT - ~~AR~~ PF
Control # DC-35

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
PUBLIC COMMENT HEARING ON
IDAHO HIGH-LEVEL WASTE
AND FACILITIES DISPOSITION
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2000

SHILO INN
IDAHO FALLS, IDAHO

Reported by:
Kimberly Carpenter, CSR #600

EASTERN IDAHO COURT REPORTERS
P. O. Box 50853
Idaho Falls, ID 83405
(208) 529-0222

1 understand that it's so we can get your comments
2 on the record.

3 Okay. I think we're ready now to begin
4 the formal comment portion of this evening's
5 proceeding. I want to stress that this is a
6 formal hearing and a recorded proceeding and a
7 full transcript is being prepared.

8 And, finally, I want to take the time to
9 thank you for attending the hearing and indulging
10 me in the little rules we've got to help this
11 thing proceed in an orderly fashion.

12 Our first speaker is Georgia Dixon.

13 And Ms. Dixon will be followed by Susan
14 Hobbs.

15 MS. GEORGIA DIXON: My name is Georgia
16 Dixon, G-E-O-R-G-I-A, D-I-X-O-N. I am the
17 district assistant for United States Senator
18 Larry Craig.

19 And I would like to read just a brief
20 statement from Senator Craig. He is also -- he
21 also serves on the Energy Committee of the United
22 States Senate and will have other opportunity to
23 speak further to this issue.

24 The Department of Energy in Idaho has
25 managed dry granular calcined mixed high-level

1 waste in above-ground storage tanks and liquid
2 mixed transuranic waste in tanks below the ground
3 according to regulatory requirements for many
4 years. With the agreement made between the State
5 of Idaho and the Department of Energy, this waste
6 will be treated for transportation in the highest
7 and most safely effective way possible.

8 This Draft Environmental Impact
9 Statement analyzes five waste treatment
10 alternatives that span the years between the
11 years 2000 and 2035. It also analyzes six
12 facilities disposition alternatives.

13 [I am very impressed with the reliability
14 and the readability of this document.] It is
15 unusual for a Draft Environmental Impact
16 Statement to be a document that is
17 user-friendly. I must congratulate the project
18 staff for their efforts to provide scientific
19 information in a manner that the general public
20 can understand.

21 It is important to know that the
22 decisions made from this document and the public
23 input will determine how DOE will treat the great
24 amount of radioactive and hazardous material for
25 shipment out of Idaho. I encourage all Idahoans

1 to review this DEIS and send their comments to
2 the DOE by the deadline of March 20, 2000.

3 Thank you.

4 THE FACILITATOR: Thank you for your
5 comments, Ms. Dixon. Thank you.

6 Just briefly, before Ms. Hobbs comes
7 up -- after Ms. Hobbs will be Laurel Hall -- I
8 have a couple housekeeping items.

9 As the hearing officer, I introduced as
10 Exhibit No. 1 in this evening's proceeding the
11 Federal Register Notice, notifying the public of
12 the meeting.

13 I have also introduced, as Exhibit
14 No. 2, the talking points from Mr. Wichmann. And
15 those are Exhibits 1 and 2.

16 Exhibit 3 will be a one-page letter from
17 Senator Larry Craig dated February 7.

18 Sorry for the interruption. Please
19 proceed.

20 MS. SUZANNE HOBBS: My name is Suzanne
21 Hobbs, S-U-Z-A-N-N-E, H-O-B-B-S. I'm the
22 regional director for United States Senator Mike
23 Crapo here in Idaho Falls. Mailing address is
24 490 Memorial Drive, Suite 102.

25 Mike Crapo wrote: I appreciate the

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1 opportunity to provide input on the Idaho
2 High-Level Waste and Facilities Disposition Draft
3 Environmental Impact Statement and regret that I
4 could not be here in person.

5 As a lifelong Idahoan, I am a strong
6 supporter of the people and programs at the
7 INEEL. The INEEL has served the nation and
8 contributed to the enhancement of Idaho for more
9 than 50 years, and continues to do so today and
10 will continue to do so in the future.

11 Although the INEEL has been and
12 continues to be an asset to the nation and Idaho,
13 the environmental legacy of Cold War weapons
14 production in the INEEL missions has left 4,200
15 cubic meters of mixed high-level waste calcine
16 and 1.4 million gallons of liquid mixed
17 transuranic sodium-bearing waste. This
18 high-level waste must be safely disposed of so
19 that future generations are not burdened by this
20 legacy.

21 The process established by the National
22 Environmental Policy Act includes an
23 environmental impact statement as the method of
24 ensuring that federal decisions that could
25 significantly affect the quality of the

1 environment are made considering all the facts.
2 Paramount in this process are considerations of
3 the environment and public and worker health and
4 safely.

5 This public comment period allows input
6 to the decision-making process prior to
7 initiation of major federal actions. As a step
8 forward in cleaning up the waste in Idaho, the
9 1995 Settlement Agreement between the State of
10 Idaho and the Departments of Energy and Navy
11 identifies milestones that must be met for
12 treatments and removal of the waste from Idaho.

13 I am a strong supporter of the 1995
14 Settlement Agreement and will do all that I can
15 to ensure that the Department of Energy continues
16 to meet its obligations to clean up the Cold War
17 legacy at the INEEL. To date, all portions of
18 the agreement have been met.

19 This Draft EIS discusses actions that
20 feed directly into meeting the milestones to
21 complete calcine-issued sodium-bearing and liquid
22 high-level waste by December 31, 2012, and to
23 complete the treatments of all high-level waste
24 so it is ready to be moved out of Idaho by
25 December 31, 2035.

1 Some of the waste processing
2 alternatives, if chosen, would not meet all
3 aspects of the Settlement Agreement. The Draft
4 EIS states that two of the alternatives will not
5 meet the 2035 milestone for having high-level
6 waste ready for shipment out of Idaho.

7 One of these two is the no-action
8 alternative, which is required to be investigated
9 to provide a baseline for the NEPA process. In
10 addition, the Draft EIS states that it may be
11 difficult to have all of the waste out of the
12 underground storage tanks and cease using them by
13 2012 for seven of the alternatives.

14 [I am a supporter of the Settlement
15 Agreement and encourage the State and the
16 Department of Energy to choose an alternative
17 that meets the milestones in the
18 court-enforceable agreement.]

19 I also want to encourage all Idahoans to
20 review the Draft EIS and participate in the
21 public comment period. Public comment is an
22 important part of the federal agency's
23 decision-making process and is one of the factors
24 that will be considered when choosing a course of
25 action.

1 Sincerely, Michael D. Crapo, United
2 States Senator.

3 THE FACILITATOR: Thank you for your
4 comments.

5 Ms. Hall.

6 Exhibit 4 will be a two-page document,
7 letter from Senator Mike Crapo.

8 MS. LAUREL HALL: My name is Laurel
9 Hall, L-A-U-R-E-L, Hall, H-A-L-L. I represent
10 Representative Mike Simpson. I am the director
11 of his United Resources INEEL Issues.

12 Statement by Representative Mike
13 Simpson: The U.S. Department of Energy has some
14 important decisions to make regarding management
15 of high-level waste and mixed transuranic waste
16 now stored at the Idaho National Engineering and
17 Environmental Laboratory.

18 High-level waste management is a
19 complex, technical subject, and it is important
20 for Idahoans to understand that these decisions
21 will determine how DOE will treat large amounts
22 of radioactive and hazardous material stored over
23 the Snake River Plain aquifer and how DOE will
24 close contaminated facilities when they are no
25 longer needed.

1 The Idaho High-Level Waste and
2 Facilities Disposition Draft Environmental Impact
3 Statement that DOE-Idaho has just issued for
4 public review and comment is the critical first
5 step in this decision-making process. While it
6 is not a decision document itself, it provides
7 the scientific information about the potential
8 impacts to the environmental of various
9 management alternatives that DOE is considering.

10 The document gives Idahoans the
11 opportunity to study these environmental issues,
12 compare the impacts of different actions and to
13 make their voices heard under the National
14 Environmental Policy Act.

15 [The DOE project staff have obviously
16 worked hard to convey technical information in a
17 manner that -- manner that the general public can
18 understand.] I encourage all Idaho citizens to
19 review the EIS and send their comments on to the
20 Department of Energy.

21 Public comment is a very important
22 process that is provided for the public to give
23 input. It is very important that we, as
24 Idahoans, give our public comments, and that it
25 should help and will help DOE in determining and

1 considering their choice of action.

2 Thank you.

3 THE FACILITATOR: Thank you for your
4 comments.

5 Mr. Siemer is next, Darryl Siemer,
6 followed by Joe Marantette.

7 If I've got the last name pronounced
8 wrong, forgive me.

9 MR. DARRYL SIEMER: Name is Darryl
10 Siemer, D-A-R-R-Y-L, S-I-E-M-E-R. Address,
11 12 North 3167 East, Idaho Falls.

12 Three minutes. I'm a technical guy.
13 I've worked in high-level waste. I've worked in
14 reprocessing. I've worked in quite a number of
15 areas at the Site for quite a long time.

16 THE FACILITATOR: Mr. Siemer --

17 MR. DARRYL SIEMER: Yes?

18 THE FACILITATOR: -- if you stray too
19 far from the microphone, we can't hear you.

20 MR. DARRYL SIEMER: Our mission is very
21 simple. The State quite wisely asked and got DOE
22 to agree to do two things. One is to finish
23 calcining the liquid waste and convert it to a
24 dry powder, add it to the other calcine, and then
25 to convert all of these calcines into road-ready

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1 waste forms. That's our mission, very simple and
2 straightforward.]
3 [The basic reason for this is that INEL
4 is a lousy repository site. This is not the
5 place we should be leaving large amounts of
6 waste, whether it's radioactive or toxic.] [And we
7 do need to close the loop on the nuclear fuel
8 cycle.] We can do that here.
9 [This EIS is a document that is supposed
10 to explain what the alternatives are and to be a
11 document that guides decision-makers in making
12 decisions.]
13 [How should we be doing this mission that
14 we've been given?
15 One is, of course, we should obey the
16 law. And the law is really pretty
17 straightforward. Now, the law is different than
18 the assumptions that are generally used when
19 people make decisions in the DOE complex.
20 Decisions are made based on DOE policy, not so
21 much on the law.]
22 [And, of course, we should do it
23 efficiently, because one of the impacts that we
24 have is to the taxpayer, and we have tremendous
25 impacts to the taxpayer.

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1 How can we do this more efficiently?
2 Well, we can follow the example that
3 Great Britain did. Great Britain faced the same
4 problem we did and solved the same problem we
5 did. And now, if you're familiar with BNFL --
6 big company -- it's over here taking jobs from
7 us.
8 How did it solve its historic
9 reprocessing waste problem?
10 With cements. That's how it did it.
11 Very successfully.] Now it's over here.
12 [Why do we have all of these options up
13 here to do something as simple as turn a pile of
14 sand into rock?
15 Well, it's because there are certain
16 assumptions under the way that we approach
17 problems like this.] One --
18 One minute. Technical. One minute.
19 [One is that vitrification is the only
20 way that high-level waste can be treated. That's
21 not true.] [Another is that volume is the
22 characteristic of waste that is most difficult to
23 deal with. And that is not true either.] Those
24 options make both of those assumptions -- both of
25 those assumptions are wrong.

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- New Information -

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